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CHALLENGE

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Free Mohawk!

KKKOPS AND COURTS PART OF RACIST STATE TERROR

'It's just a harrowing thought to come face-to-face with the realization that I don't matter as much as the Nordstrom window.'

- Mowhawk Johnson

CHICAGO, October 14—"FREE MOHAWK! FREE THEM ALL!" This militant chant and others were taken up by at least two dozen antiracist fighters outside the Leighton Criminal Courthouse/Cook County Jail this morning. We stand in unshakeable support for local Black artist and activist Jeremey "Mohawk" Johnson who was scheduled for a hearing in the capitalist bosses' racist kkkourts today. The campaign to free Mohawk demonstrates the power of working class unity and the necessity of smashing the bosses' racist state. Mohawk was arrested during an antiracist, anti-kkkop protest in downtown Chicago on August 15. After the klan-in-blue corralled and viciously attacked demonstrators, he was caught up in the fray. Even after posting bail, he was still held for days in jail before being released on house arrest with an ankle monitor.

The notoriously racist Chicago Police Department (CPD) released his mug shot and personal information—including his home address—to the public, which has led to death threats and racist assaults on his character. But despite facing down this capitalist state violence, Mohawk is holding strong, grounded in his own convictions and growing mass support. The international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) is fighting to help build the campaign in support of Mohawk. There's no shortage of examples of how racist capitalism and its courts and cops attack and murder our class, particularly Black workers worldwide. It will take a mass worker-led movement fighting for communist revolution in order to crush racism and capitalism, and truly achieve justice and liberation for the international working class.

Getting to know Mohawk

Although the kkkops and the capitalist media have painted him as a "monster," anyone who spends a moment in his presence knows that Mohawk is anything but. Among his many friends, family, fans and supporters he is known for his exceptional talents as an artist/rapper as well as being a funny and caring individual.

Mohawk was raised in an environment committed to fighting against racist structures, having had a number of relatives involved in working-class struggles. These interactions have influenced his antiracist worldview, and largely are what led him to be present at the protest on that fateful day in August.

During a recent virtual conversation with several PLP members Mohawk shared many statements of antiracist wisdom over a range of subjects.

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Don't vote, revolt! Fight back to smash capitalism

With one of the most divisive elections in U.S. history fast approaching, workers need to be clear on one point above all: Regardless of who gets elected, our class loses. Both Donald Trump and Joe Biden have built their careers on racist attacks on the working class. We know they have tactical and strategic differences; they front for different wings of the blood-sucking capitalist bosses. But no matter which candidate wriggles out on top of the rulers' manure pile on November 3, workers will face a life-and-death struggle ahead. Rising fascism and racist terror by kkkops and other vigilantes will continue to be the order of the day. Imperialist slaughter will still be around the corner. Democrat or Republican, there are no good bosses. Voting for a "lesser" evil can't bring us the future we need. Just as capitalism and racism were grown together, in the atrocities of the slave trade in Africa, only with communist revolution will they die together!

Vile, racist Trump: Fascist #45

Trump is vile and despicable, a racist, sexist monster. The roll call of U.S. presidents is a rogue's gallery, from slave-trading rapists (aka the Founding Fathers) to "progressive" racists (Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson) to mass-murdering war criminals (FDR, JFK, LBJ, the Bushes, and Obama, to name a few). Even so, Trump stands out as the ugly face of U.S. capitalist decline and decay. Without a doubt, millions of our working-class sisters and brothers are terrified of another four years of Fascist #45 and are flocking to vote him out. But they're also cynical about electoral politics, as Thomas Edsall noted in the New York Times: "Neither party has been able to command enduring trust from American voters since 1980. In that sense, both parties are fundamentally minority parties" (10/21).

Make no mistake. As foul as he is, Trump and the small-time, Fortress America bosses he serves are not the biggest danger to our class!

Voting has never protected workers' "rights"

Elections are a tool the capitalists use to settle their differences while diverting workers' rage from the source of all our problems—the profit system. Voting has never resulted in substantial or long-lasting change. The Democratic Party misleaders are working overtime to scare workers into turning out for Jim Crow Joe and Top Cop Kamala Harris to preserve the Affordable Care Act (which leaves tens of millions uninsured) and women's abortion rights (already dismantled in much of the country). In reality, the health care of our class has been gutted over decades by the likes of cutbacks king Andrew Cuomo as well as by Republicans. Last year, just before the pandemic, cities run mostly by Democrats were closing hospitals at a rate of nearly 30 per month! The impact was especially lethal for poor Black and Latin communities (US News, July 10, 2019).

The debate around a woman's right to "choose" is inextricably tied to racism. While abortion rates have broadly declined over the last 15 years, it's the racist inequalities of capitalism that lead Black women to choose abortions at higher rates. Indeed, "from mass incarceration to maternal and infant mortality...The best way to reduce abortions is to address the difficult circumstances that lead so many black women to end their pregnancies" (New York Times, 7/6/2019). We know that racism and sexism are inherent to capitalism and class society. No capitalist sell-out or stooge will ever care about our wellbeing or our children's future!

The liberals' panic over Black workers' loss of the "right" to vote obscures more racist history. In 1865, the 13th Amendment ended chattel slavery while sanctioning the enslavement of Black workers in prisons and jails and ignoring the racist terror of the Black Codes and Jim Crow. Exactly 100 years later, the U.S. Congress passed both the Voting Rights Act and Lyndon Johnson's Law Enforcement Assistance Act, the first giant step toward militarized local police and mass incarceration. In the upcoming election, more than 5 million workers will be prohibited from voting because of a felony conviction in the criminal injustice system. Black workers are four times more likely to be barred from choosing their next exploiter (sentencingproject.org).

Joe Biden—class enemy #1

For nearly half a century, Biden has played a lead role in building racism, sexism, and war while serving the interests of finance capital. Jim Crow Joe's career took off in the 1970s in the U.S. Senate, where he opposed busing for school integration. By the early 1980s, Biden was busy legislating racist police terror and mass incarceration, partnering with gutter segregationist Strom Thurmond to legalize the seizure of property from poor workers and use it to buy military-style weapons for cops.

In 1988, Biden co-authored the infamous "100-to-1" law that targeted Black and Latin workers with mandatory 10-year sentences for possessing small amounts of crack cocaine. In 1994, he decried "predators on our streets" and led the charge for Bill Clinton's Crime Bill, which doubled the U.S. prison population and caged generations of Black and Latin workers. Biden's slogan sounded a lot like Trump: "Lock the SOB's up!" (NYT, 6/25/19). To this day, after another year of mostly unpunished lynchings by the Klan-in-Blue, the Democratic candidate supports even more funding for mad dog cops (The Hill, 8/5).

A loyal imperialist front man, Biden cheered on NATO's bombing of Kosovo, the better to secure an oil pipeline for U.S. refineries. He supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq that killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. As vice president, he backed the Barack Obama drone wars that murdered uncounted helpless families and children.

Kamala Harris—class enemy #2

As district attorney in San Francisco and later as California's state attorney general, Top Cop Harris "fought tooth and nail to uphold wrongful convictions" (theguardian.com, 1/31/19). The cops' racial profiling of Black workers flourished on her watch. At a time when murders-by-cop were at historic highs, Harris's office backed useless reforms like body cameras and police force "diversity" while refusing to prosecute even the most notorious cases (New York Times, 8/9).

In her inaugural as attorney general, Harris threatened parents of truant children with "the full force and consequences of the law"—and then laughed at the backlash (theguardian.com, 1/30/19). Instead of creating programs to support working parents, she criminalized them.

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Charge Black prosecutor for crimes against our class

Five families whose loved ones were killed by police and Progressive Labor Party unite to demand justice at the Southeast Division police station in South LA (see next issue).

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD, October 17— Scores of antiracist fighters gathered to condemn racist police brutality in Prince George's County, MD, Baltimore, and the world. Fiery speeches were delivered by relatives of Black men murdered by the police from the 1990s through today. The rally closed with a bold speech by a PLP member who urged participants to organize long-term to crush the fountainhead of racist brutality—capitalism—with multiracial militant organizing through the Progressive Labor Party (PLP).

Then came Part II of today's direct action – an unpublicized caravan to the opulent, corner-lot home of County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. She is a Black Democrat and former prosecutor who uses nationalism to cover up her cop-loving history and her selfish ambitions to be governor. She is one of many Black politicians in the county leadership who dismiss the needs of Black working class people in Prince George's. Over 50 people filled the street and sidewalks by her house, with multiple bullhorns blasting her for her crimes against the working class. It took the cops over 15 minutes to show up to protect her and attempt (unsuccessfully) to intimidate us!

One mother condemned Alsobrooks for having indicted her son when she was States Attorney on a false gun charge. The gun in question actually belonged to the cop who made the false arrest and had been found under the laptop of the cop! A PLP member also lambasted Alsobrooks for having invited the mother of a teenager who had been murdered by the police to a meeting on false pretenses after a protest. She told this mother and her many supporters that she had no intention of re-opening the case! The teenager, Archie Elliott III, was gunned down by cops in 1993 while seated in a patrol car after having been searched, hands cuffed behind his back. The cops falsely claimed he pointed a gun at them from that position! The PLer declared, "We, the united working class, are coming for you and your capitalist partners in crime." Other speakers criticized Alsobrooks' attempt to co-opt the antiracist movement by establishing a police reform task force that includes mainly cops and prosecutors, with window-dressing slots for representatives from the NAACP, the SCLC, PG Changemakers, and the Public Defenders' office.

This event was initiated by the sister of the Hyattsville police murder victim Leonard Shand (see CHALLENGE, 11/6/2019 and 5/27), and joined by other local organizations that have grown as a result of the summer of uprisings after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. It also comes on the heels of a major Zoom conference organized by Community Justice on police brutality in Prince George's County. The rally occurred only a day after another young worker was killed by the Hyattsville police. PLP members have provided leadership and consistency to the past 45 years of struggle here against police brutality and continue to organize amidst the rising anger and militancy of these organizations. This bodes well for a resurgent working class revolt against the capitalist system.

But still, a recurring theme at anti-police brutality actions like this one is the imperative to hold cops and politicians accountable and to demand reforms to achieve this. The truth is that the police and politicians are doing the jobs they're supposed to – on behalf of the capitalist class, not us! The capitalists need racist intimidation and terror against the working class in order to keep us fearful and divided, reducing our ability to unify and overthrow their racist exploitative system. We would do well, then, to expand our vision beyond fruitless efforts to reform an unchangeably exploitative system and heed the words of the PLP speaker who called for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism itself, and its replacement with a system of communist equality and collectivity.✪

Mohawk: racism is essential to capitalist system

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concerning racist inequalities and over-policing in Chicago neighborhoods: "I think there's a lot of money we need for schools. I think there's a lot of money we need for roads, a lot of money we need for mental health institutions and hospitals and access to food and access to housing. If we were to address those core needs within our neighborhoods and environments, crime would probably drop significantly… They have better schools, they don't have food deserts or stuff like that, so if we can get every neighborhood in Chicago to be like that, crime would go down and then the necessity for police."

On the racist priority of property over workers' lives under capitalism: "It's a scary day when you turn on the TV and Target is getting more sympathy for a broken window than hundreds of Black people being murdered on camera… It's just a harrowing thought to come face-to-face with the realization that I don't matter as much as the Nordstrom window."

Regarding what drives him to fight back, "You just have to see something wrong and go,...I'm not gonna let that happen... and then do the best you can with the best you have. That's it."

Building the mass antiracist campaign

The mass student and worker-led support in defense of Mohawk has been amazing. Immediately after learning of his arrest, friends and supporters jumped to social media and other outlets to organize court support and fundraising events.

For every day that he has been scheduled for a court hearing, there have been dozens of supporters protesting outside. At the beginning of this month, friends organized a "Freedom Ride" downtown where people rode bicycles and skateboards to Cook County State Attorney Kim Foxx's, a Black woman politician elected in 2016, office to demand that she drop the racist charges. A 24-hour virtual fundraiser on his behalf drew local artists and even more support.

Members of PLP have helped contribute to a number of these actions, helping to lead chants, give speeches against this racist system, and distribute CHALLENGE newspaper. Some friends and supporters have since committed to CHALLENGE reading groups where we work to connect Mohawk's fight for justice to the need to tear down this entire racist, sexist profit system and replace it with an egalitarian communist society based on workers' development and needs.

The masses make history

Although Mohawk has received significant support so far, we can't sugarcoat the danger of the bosses and their system, or the hard battle that lies ahead. Just by standing outside Cook County Jail, we're forced to think of all the incarcerated workers, mostly Black and Latin, detained inside risking exposure to coronavirus and other racist attacks.

In the 1930s, when nine Black youth from Scottsboro, Alabama faced execution for fake charges of raping two white women, it was a communist-led mass movement of millions that forced the bosses to retreat. More recently, it was the mass movement of thousands here in Chicago and across the country that forced the arrest and conviction of racist killer cop Jason Van Dyke after he murdered Black teen Laquan McDonald on video in 2014.

This is to say: it's the militant mass movement of millions of workers and students that truly holds the potential to force change, not confidence in the bosses' legal system or politicians. PLP will continue to build the mass movement wherever we are, fighting for working-class justice and communist revolution. Free Mohawk! Join PLP!✪

To support this antiracist campaign, go to https://linktr.ee/FreeMohawk

Neighbors teach how to fight fascism

MEXICO, October 20—In a community east of Mexico City, where the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has been organizing for almost three decades and CHALLENGE circulates regularly, a group of approximately 150 residents organized to prevent the theft and dismantling of the Infrastructure and Network of Electric Power. Workers of the state controlled Federal Electricity Commission's (CFE, Spanish acronym) contractors steal the existing better-quality copper wiring and install poorer quality wiring.That is the main reason why workers in the area are opposed to changing their electrical power wiring and the installation of the new meter system. Not only is it a breach of the agreement that they entered with former employees of defunct Luz y Fuerza del Centro (see CHALLENGE 1/26/2017), but it would also result in a rate increase. The advancement of CFE plans that they deceitfully want to impose as a supposed benefit to the population, will cause greater service deficiencies and bigger profits for the financial bosses.

Workers counter growing fascism with class struggle

A crew of about 20 CFE workers arrived in the community. This time they were accompanied by members of three police forces: municipal cops, a special state police group and National Guard elements, which are military police. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) has militarized the police, to guarantee the bosses' projects, and repress the people that protest against them. (CHALLENGE 2/6). This spectacular display failed to intimidate the brave neighborhood residents who confronted the overbearing CFE gang leader. The neighbors had a small victory when they forced the CFE workers and the cops who protected them to leave.

The tensest moment came when the police tried to surround some of our comrades who have helped to organize and lead this movement, but far from being cowed, they managed to escape the encirclement. They took shelter and began to organize the next action in which one of the objectives is to summon a larger group of neighbors big enough to surround the police. These plans reflect the fact that the best lessons on confronting growing fascism are learned amid class struggle.

With the existing copper cables, some working-class neighbors improvise connections in order, according to the company, to "steal" electricity. By switching to aluminum cables, this will no longer be possible. Similarly, the new digital meters allow the CFE to remotely cut off service at debtor homes. The government, the bosses, and their media have tried to call these workers who "steal" electricity or have payment debts abusers and thieves, who prevent modernizing the electrical infrastructure.

At the same time, they hide the fact that the CFE grants millions of dollars in subsidies for electrical service to large and medium-sized private and state companies.

Co-0pt and attack: what liberal fascists do best

In 2009, the criminal government of President Felipe Calderón fully acquired the electricity company, Compañía de Luz y Fuerza del Centro, which left around 40,000 electrical workers unemployed. The CFE used contractors to keep providing service, which caused excessive and irregular charges, so that residents, mainly from marginalized neighborhoods, organized together with some of the fired workers from Luz y Fuerza, against these unfair charges. They also promoted a payment strike and other actions to prevent any electrical infrastructure changes. This is what happened in this community with PLP's leadership.

AMLO's liberal government has launched a defamatory and repressive campaign against social movements to carry out the bosses' plans. Supported by its political force, it has managed to appease traditionally combative sectors of the working class, such as the teachers of Section 22 of Oaxaca. The movements that it fails to co-opt, it tries to intimidate or represses. That is what happened here and with other movements like the movement against the Morelos Comprehensive Plan.

PLP's presence in this type of struggle, in addition to confirming our trust and dedication to our class, is key to unmasking the liberal politicians as enemies of the workers and building the organization to end this criminal system. The international working class must support these actions of resistance to the bosses' plans. This solidarity across borders produces a powerful force to confront fascism.✪

No justice for Breonna under profit system

After nearly 200 days of protesting the cops who murdered 26-year-old Black Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Breonna Taylor, the city of Louisville, Kentucky agreed to pay a settlement of 12 million dollars to Taylor's family. The settlement is considered "historic" because it is one of the largest payouts (and in a relatively short amount of time) for a police killing of a Black worker in the U.S. Meanwhile, the one cop who was charged, did so for accidentally spraying his ammo into a neighboring apartment.

No amount of money will substitute for the lives stolen by this system, no matter how many times the bosses try to wash their blood-soaked hands with it. Racism is essential for capitalists to divide and control the working class and the ruling class will never truly punish the thugs who maintain their power. Therefore, we are left with one choice: turn our anger into action and organize ourselves into the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) for communist revolution.

Louisville: the rule, not the exception

There's a heap of lies surrounding the actions of Louisville police. The attorney general, Daniel Cameron, lied about the grand jury unanimously agreeing to drop charges against the officers. Then, Cameron used his race to appeal to the Black community as he stood before the public to say that the officers would not be charged. In one account, the officers claim to have had a no-knock search warrant, but say they knocked and announced themselves anyway. In another account, they claim to have had a "no-knock" warrant initially, but then claimed that it changed to a "knock and announce" warrant.

Either way, "no-knock" warrants will never stop the police from murdering workers, especially Black workers. As Professor Alex Vitale said in his book, The Ending of Policing, the police are "violence-workers". They are trained to be violent, and use excessive force in Black and immigrant communities. Police reforms like those promoted by Black Lives Matter-aligned groups cannot deter them from doing that job.

Take the body cameras, for instance. Since the killing of Mike Brown in 2014, the use of body cameras was expanded. Yet, the cops have shot and killed nearly the same number of people every year since (Washington Post). In the case of Breonna Taylor's murder, the footage from the body-camera was only recently made public and strongly suggests the lack of integrity of the crime scene after the raid and the investigation that followed.

The city of Louisville installed their first Black woman chief of police, Yvette Gentry. When asked what she thought about the lack of reforms in the department, Gentry said the reforms would "take a life of their own" and made clear that she's "not a fan of taking too many tools off the table", claiming that it's more of a matter of recruiting the "right men and women." This is how the ruling class uses identity politics to persuade workers into fighting for broken reforms and accepting the racist murders capitalism has to offer. But no matter the gender, race, or ethics of the individual person, or which end of the political spectrum they are on, the job of the police is to protect and serve the ruling class and to keep the working class subdued. It's in their history.

Police: frontline defenders of capitalism

Today's police are descendants of capitalism's growing need to terrorize and control the working class. Their origins began in the British colonial era, when the bosses formed patrols of native-born Irish workers in 1812 to suppress violent Irish working class rebellions against British imperialism. Wearing distinctive uniforms with copper metal buttons, these "coppers" or "cops" were formed in London as masses of workers first joined militant trade unions in the 1820s.

By 1855, policing was adopted by the U.S. bosses in rapidly industrializing Chicago, amid growing working class strike movements. While the British bosses may have invented the concept of police, it was their former apprentices, the U.S. bosses who gave birth to racism, who took it and ran with it. The Chicago Police Department, is comprised of fugitive slave catchers, terrorist anti-union Pinkerton detectives and later KKK scum, soon spread their model to cities like New York and everywhere as this model was adopted by capitalists worldwide, all developing into the police forces we know today.

While bosses try to placate the working class with a number of police reforms, including implementing what they've called, "Breonna's Law", which bans no-knock search warrants—it can never alter the fundamental character of what the police are.

The ruling class has nothing to offer the working class. The working class as a whole cannot be bought or bribed into forgetting the rulers who murder us for the sake of profit. What will truly be historic is when the entire international working class unites behind the red banners of PLP, and throws this entire capitalist system into the garbage can of history once and for all.✪

Don't vote, revolt!

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When and if she becomes the first Black and Asian woman to be vice president,Harris's shameful history as a servant of the racist, sexist ruling class exposes the dead end of identity politics.

Biden and Harris say they'll restore "progressive" income and corporate tax hikes to squeeze the wealthy to finance the next inter-imperialist conflict, most likely with China. But while the finance capital bosses know they need to discipline their own degenerate class, it is ultimately our class who will pay the ultimate sacrifice for U.S. imperialism. These Big Fascist rulers know they need a committed, patriotic military composed of working-class Black, white, Latin and Asian workers, all united behind the bosses' bloody wars for profit. That's a big reason why the liberals are so desperate to get the isolationist, white nationalist Trump out of office. For ExxonMobil and JP-Morgan Chase, Trump's worst offense is his refusal to invest blood and treasure in the defense of their failing empire.

We need revolution for workers' power

Even as much of the summer's militant antiracist fightback has been diverted into futile voting, Progressive Labor Party must continue to lead our coworkers and friends into the class struggle. We must immerse ourselves in mass movements and reform battles while turning them into schools for communism. No matter who occupies the White House in January, the bosses will keep moving toward fascism and war; the crisis of their system demands it. Now is the time to plant the seeds for communist revolution. Now is the time to overcome workers' fear and cynicism—to prepare our class to move from the ballot box to the streets. Join Progressive Labor Party! Fight for communism!✪

Beds, not body bags— communism, not capitalism

Hundreds of workers and community members at Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center have signed a petition "Beds not Body Bags" protesting racist Governor Andrew Cuomo's plan to consolidate three hospitals (Kingsbrook, Brookdale and Interfaith). This would eliminate over 200 hospital beds as we move into a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. These hospitals are located in and serve the heavily Black neighborhoods of Flatbush, Crown Heights, Bed-Stuy, and Ocean Hill-Brownsville. Cuomo serves the billionaire capitalists of Wall Street and New York real estate; racism is the lifeblood of capitalism.

Over the last 20 years over 20,000 hospital beds have been cut in New York State. Cuomo closed Long Island College Hospital Center, pared down Brookdale Hospital, and closed many services at Downstate Medical Center. Many workers were laid off, mostly women and Black, Latin and Asian workers. In the end, Brooklyn has 2.2 hospital beds per 1000 people while Manhattan has 6.4 beds per 1000 people.

Covid-19 a disaster in Brooklyn after years of cuts

The lack of infrastructure in medical care caused by the continual cuts led to thousands of unnecessary deaths in the outer boroughs of NYC even before Covid-19. The pandemic starkly exposed the racist nature of these cuts. You can put a bunch of beds in the hospital cafeteria, but you can't staff them quickly. Skeleton teams of nurses, doctors, technical, and housekeeping staff could not keep the hospitals safe for patients or workers. Covid patients lying in hallways, shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), medications and bodies piling up in refrigerated trucks (and sometimes unrefrigerated trucks) were the order of the day. During the height of the pandemic in the spring, the hospitals being downsized were seeing 500 Covid patients a day. The years of cuts absolutely contributed to higher numbers of deaths in Brooklyn, especially of Black and Latin workers.

Capitalist inequality can't be voted out

This goes way beyond racist Donald Trump. It implicates the whole capitalist class, and both Democratic and Republican politicians, as racist agents of genocide. Liberal politicians like Joe Biden and Cuomo get the cuts done. And they get away with it because they claim to be more pro-the-little-guy, more antiracist than the conservatives. The main finance wing of the ruling class needs this because they need more resources for maintaining their imperialist world empire (this means wars). And union leaders are part of this liberal cover for the racist inequalities of capitalist health care. Instead of taking on liberal capitalist politicians like Cuomo, most union leadership tells people to vote for them on November 3rd. In Progressive Labor Party we say don't vote, revolt. . Lead walkouts, rallies, marches, and strikes against racist health care. Unite hospital workers with our communities. But make no mistake. Capitalism will not, cannot provide decent health care for workers, especially Black and Latin workers. We need a revolution to get rid of it.

These cuts have prompted major fightback by hospital workers in Brooklyn in particular, but also nationally with strikes in Chicago and massive marches and rallies in the affected neighborhoods. Over the years, Progressive Labor Party has joined and at times led marches and protests at Brookdale and Downstate. We will unite with all workers to help smash the racist system of capitalism that values profit over human life. Only an egalitarian communist revolution can create a society of equality and solidarity that can transform the capitalist world into a world where the international working class is empowered to run society. The rebellions against racist police terror all over the world this past summer show our class is ready to fight. Now we need you to join our Party (see www.plp.org) and help us fight not only for "beds not body bags" but also for communism.✪

NJ students, faculty fight Covid-19 cuts to colleges

NEW JERSEY, October 21— "Workers created unions to fight, not be in bed with the bosses. You run this union like a country club!" Class struggle has been heating up at Essex County College (ECC) with faculty and members of the Progressive Labor Party indicting their local racist local union misleaders at a local meeting recently against racist cutbacks and layoffs on staff and services amidst the pandemic.

PL'ers and friends have been in the thick of organizing fightback and student and staff unity, and the fight is only just beginning to fight back against these conditions and build a mass revolutionary communist PLP that can smash this entire system!

Cutbacks are racist attacks on students

ECC is a community college in Newark with currently around 5,000 working class students, with the majority of the students, faculty and staff Black, Latin, immigrant and women. Every cut and layoff is a racist and sexist attack on this student population, who depend on the staff and services being cut. Meanwhile, while the cuts were being announced, ECC received eight million dollars in federal Covid-19 relief.

Over the summer, ECC students and faculty organized 300 students and workers to sign a petition demanding to know where this money had disappeared to and presented it at an online Board of Trustees meeting. The students were not only prevented from speaking because of a rule requiring all comments be submitted 24 hours in advance, their petition was openly laughed at by several of the Trustees.

Furthermore, and conveniently for the bosses, the person who could best answer the students' questions—ECC President Andrew Munroe— had just resigned to assume presidency of a college right across the Hudson River: at the City University of New York's Borough of Manhattan Community College in neighboring New York City.

Sharpening fascism and ...shared sacrifice'

Fascist attacks on the working class in Newark have been sharpening for decades. ECC's new president, Augustine Boakye, is connected to both Newark's local real estate bosses and Democrat Mayor Ras Baraka through organizations like the Greater Newark Convention and Visitors' Bureau.

The GNCVB and Big Fascist-tied investment banks Citigroup, Goldman Sachs and insurance giant Prudential have poured hundreds of millions of dollars to attract property developers and companies like Amazon while driving out working class Black residents (NYT, 11/26/19; PR Newswire, 9/26/19).

ECC's Board of Trustees is composed of former politicians and lawyers from firms who have helped lead these attacks. ECC's union chapter looks and acts like a capitalist country club: led by an all-white group of racist men whose chapter chair is paid more than the ECC president. The chapter is part of the National Educators' Association (NEA), the largest union in the U.S. with over two million members. Along with their counterpart the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the union is close allies of the Big Fascist-aligned Democratic Party.

These fascist union misleaders have joined with the ECC Trustees and NJ Governor Murphy in calling for "shared sacrifice" through five per cent pay cuts, which will force faculty deeper into poverty and searching for additional jobs, all of which worsen student learning conditions.

Fightback grows

ECC students, faculty and PLP have waged years-long battles against both the ECC administration and these union misleaders. As a sign of our growing strength, after two years of struggle we scored an important victory in getting a racist, sexist administrator fired. With PLP leadership, faculty continue to expose the ECC union misleaders utter collaboration with the bosses, and more and more faculty who have never been "political" before are stepping up to join us.

During a recent faculty town hall following the Trustees meeting, PL'ers and friends received support for calls to unify with workers in other departments under attack, including a mail clerk who was recently laid off. This semester we are also organizing with our students who reported to faculty that ECC Enrollment Services has been utterly unresponsive to them due to the cuts. We are currently planning campus demonstrations with them, and using CHALLENGE to connect these struggles with the racist attacks on workers in Newark, and that it's these same bosses driving our entire class to more fascism and imperialist wars.

Liberalism, identity politics main danger

Both ECC and Newark are led by Black misleaders—Ras Baraka, a liberal Democrat, was the target of PLP demonstration this summer. Workers are told to trust that these bosses somehow "identify" with Black workers' struggles because of their race and/or gender—yet they are forcing the most brutal cuts! Communist leadership of worker fight-back is more necessary than ever in the face of liberal fascist and gutter fascist attacks on us. As more workers see through their lies—the bosses won't stand a chance!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Bronx actions against racist terror

In the last month our Antiracist Coalition has been on the move. Almost 40 strong, we marched on the 50th Precinct, decrying their indifference to nooses and semi-automatic assault rifles found in and near Van Cortlandt Park, as well as their brutal assaults against a young Black suspect. We also demanded that no more cops be sent as first responders to calls for people in mental crisis. This provoked a huge "Blue Lives Matter" mobilization in the park days later. We were noticed!

We were invited to speak at a Climate Justice rally at Manhattan College and detailed how centuries of capitalist agribusiness have exacerbated climate catastrophes and pandemics.

These horrors deliver racist oppression upon frontline workers who are affected worst and who are giving strong leadership in the fightback against capitalist terror, like at Standing Rock. The participants were mainly students and some faculty. Two indicated that they would like to do consistent organizing with us.

Finally, we helped to organize a vigil for justice for Breonna Taylor at a Riverdale traffic circle. Streams of rush hour travelers honked their horns in support! We met two Professional Staff Congress union members who want to work with us as well.

We fight. We grow!

★★★★★

Belarus solidarity

I wanted to take the opportunity to express solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of workers and students who have been continually taking to the streets in Belarus over the past two months. They are risking arrest, torture, and even death in their protests against the corrupt and reactionary government of Alexander Lukashenko.

But even as I applaud their boldness, I'm forced to think about how capitalism tries to force the working-class everywhere to pick sides in these "lose-lose" fights, and how we can best support them as an international communist party.

Obviously they have every reason to reject a boss like Lukashenko, an authoritarian relic of failed Soviet revisionism, who is propped up with energy subsidies by the militarist Russian bosses. But on the other hand, we definitely wouldn't support pro-U.S./pro-E.U. opposition leaders like Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. Their end game if they were to be put in power would be an infusion of capitalist reforms that would only continue and likely worsen attacks like income inequality and unemployment.

The cynical U.S. and E.U. capitalist bosses only care about the "human rights" of workers in Belarus so far as the geographical location of the country is significant for their imperialist goals. Similar to how they support (one could argue unsuccessfully) regime change in Venezuela against Nicolas Maduro, their interests only lie in countering the influence of their imperialist rivals Russia and China, as they continue marching towards global conflict.

The best path forward for workers in Belarus and everywhere is to acknowledge the power we have as an international class, from Minsk to Hong Kong to Kenosha, and reject all these bosses completely. Organized into a mass international Progressive Labor Party, we can convert their upcoming world war into a class war where workers take state power and build an egalitarian communist society.

★★★★★

Capitalism & science

I have a point to add to the CHALLENGE (10/21) article *The history of philosophy is written in blood* about dialectical materialism. The two trends of materialism and idealism exist together in struggle all the time. The ideas of the new society come from the class struggle within the old society. The article points out the threat to the rule of the church from the ideas of Copernicus. The Roman Catholic Church understood the earth revolves around the sun. Copernicus was an official in the Catholic Church. The reason he was not persecuted was that he wrote it in Latin, which was not widely read, for use by the Church. Galileo became a threat when he wrote in Italian, which was an everyday language that would take the ideas outside the church's control.

Within the incorrect theory of the sun revolving around the earth, there existed many accepted materialist ideas, such as the earth was round and navigation by stars. The practice and struggle between the Church and the rising capitalist class opened the door to the theory that the sun is the center of the universe, which had been around for many centuries. It was liberated with the rise of the early capitalists, who replaced the Church as the ruling class and could utilize and build on the more advanced ideas as opposed to suppressing them.

Today the mechanical materialism of capitalism is holding science back, much as the church did in the 1600's. Capitalism is suppressing advanced ideas that debunk race and intelligence and thus threaten the bosses' power. Communist revolution, based on dialectical materialism, will both liberate existing knowledge and open the door for a deeper understanding based on more struggle and practice.

★★★★★

Book shows how liberals are biggest racist danger

The War on Poverty to the War on Crime by Elizabeth Hinton does not present a class analysis, but has valuable information by showing how liberal politicians fostered mass incarceration.

People often credit President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) , with passing the 1964 Civil Rights Act and launching federal initiatives which were supposed to launch the "War on Poverty." This is racist fiction. The next year Johnson sent to Congress the Voting Rights Act. But, just one week before that - on March 8, 1965, he presented to Congress the Law Enforcement Assistance Act (LEAA) following an urban, rebellious summer against racist police terror months prior.

America's "justice system" of prisons, jails and police has always promoted racist terror, but this act offered a response to the "threat" the Kerner Commission would, in 1968, designate as the continuing violent rebellions that came on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement.

The LEAA undercut many Great Society programs that history texts heed as LBJ's liberal legacy. Still today, political pundits cite liberal leaders as reasons why we should vote.

The capstone of Johnson's Great Society was the Safe Streets Act of 1968, which invested $400 million into the War on Crime. By 1973 this funding grew to $850 million! By 1980, Ronald Regan made this initiative far more punitive. The ruling class was able to do this given legislative proposals from Nixon and Ford which further federalized police militarization. Liberal Jimmy Carter also extended surveillance and the U.S. Border Patrol while in office.

By the beginning of the Johnson Administration, there were 184,901 mostly Black and Latin workers in state and federal prisons. By the end of Regan's "War on Drugs" that number grew to 436,008.

Liberal reformer LBJ bolstered these racist policies. Republicans did not create the expansion of our fascist "justice" criminal system - it was a product of liberal welfare programs. I would also include Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration's Executive Order 9066 that unapologetically interned some 120,000 Japanese into internment/concentration camps with about 2,000 who died of diseases like TB.

In 1942, 23-year-old Fred Korematsu was arrested for refusing to relocate to these racist hellholes. His case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, where his attorneys argued that the order violated the Fifth Amendment. He lost the case to FDR's liberal Supreme Court!

Without a historically materialist understanding, a Joe Biden vote seems like a way to fight racism. The reality is much more bleak.

A meaningful discussion and struggle with our friends is essential for organizing to fight against capitalism. A for-profit system - a system that relies on racist and sexist oppression and divisions and a fascist "justice" criminal system against the entire working class.

★★★★★

Workers took power; we will again

Continued from page 8

rope. It was the communist-led Soviet Union that smashed the Nazis, the largest and most powerful army ever mounted by a capitalist power.

All this was accomplished under the leadership of Josef Stalin. No wonder he is reviled to this day by world capitalism.

Lessons to be learned

Unfortunately, the Bolsheviks suffered from political weaknesses, which led to the return of capitalism to the USSR. From the beginning they believed that to achieve communism, first socialism had to be established, a belief Karl Marx had advanced. We have learned from that experience that socialism retained capitalism's wage system and therefore failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system. Socialism put forward material incentives to the working class rather than political ones as the way to win workers to communism. We must win masses of workers to abolish capitalism's wage system and its division of labor and fight directly for communism.

Today, no country is led by communists, but this is a temporary historical setback. While this long and volatile era of widening imperialist wars and fascist attacks on the working class is upon us, every dark night has its end.

The Progressive Labor Party is a product of both the old International Communist Movement and the struggle against its revisionism. Pseudo-leftist groups have not learned history's lessons and continue to fight for nationalist "sharing of power" with capitalists, a la Venezuela's Chavez, not for the working-class seizure of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our movement is daily fighting to learn from the Soviet Union's great battles and achievements as well as its deadly errors that led to its collapse, mainly that reformism, racism, nationalism and all forms of concessions to capitalism only lead workers to defeat. Give the ruling class an inch and they'll grab a mile.

We honor the bold fight by the workers of the Bolshevik Revolution against capitalism and for a working-class communist world. Today, we must organize workers, students and soldiers to build a mass worldwide working class Party that will turn this era of imperialist wars into a new, international communist revolution.✪

Identity politics, the bosses' tool

Over the past couple of weeks, the U.S. news cycle has been dominated by the upcoming Presidential election. The most recent Presidential and Vice Presidential debates are coming on the heels of an incredible summer of struggle, which has left many workers taking stock in local politicians and governing institutions. At the forefront for many workers is Kamala Harris who is being paraded as a progressive choice simply because she is Black and Asian. She is another example of the bosses using identity politics to pacify the working class into voting and co-signing their own demise. (see editorial on page 2)

The ruling class needs workers to believe in their institutions. As cynicism builds and splits in the ruling class continue to deepen, both the Big Fascists and Small Fascists are preparing to do anything to reclaim U.S. dominance. What they have planned is truly despicable and will result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of worker's lives – just look at the over 200,000 U.S. workers who have died during the butchering of the Covid-19 crisis. In order to tamper a worker-led uprising, the ruling class (both wings) need workers to vote-in their leaders to ensure that when they usher in rising fascism they can say, this is the future we chose for ourselves.

The only identity is worker

In the hands of the bosses, identity politics are used to weaken and divide workers across race lines. At his address at the conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery march Martin Luther King Jr. said:

If it may be said of the slavery era that the white man took the world and gave the Negro Jesus, then it may be said of the Reconstruction era that the southern aristocracy took the world and gave the poor white man Jim Crow. He gave him Jim Crow. And when his wrinkled stomach cried out for the food that his empty pockets could not provide, he

ate Jim Crow, a psychological bird that told him that no matter how bad off he was, at least he was a white man, better than the black man. And he ate Jim Crow. And when his undernourished children cried out for the necessities that his low wages could not provide, he showed them the Jim Crow signs on the buses and in the stores, on the streets and in the public buildings. And his children, too, learned to feed upon Jim Crow, their last outpost of psychological oblivion.

King points out that race as an identity has always been used to fissure the working class to keep them from rising up. In modern times, Jim Crow segregation has either been proudly celebrated by Donald Trump's racists base or shrouded in euphemisms by liberal fascists like Harris and her running-mate Jim Crow Joe An idea that the liberal fascists continue to push on workers is "Safe Spaces." A constructed idea where people of the same race are encouraged to segregate and gather, promoting an identity other than that of WORKER.

No safes spaces under capitalism

Under capitalism, however, there are no safe spaces for workers. By dividing workers, like King points out, bosses sow mistrust and strife between people. But PLP knows that multiracial, multigenerational, and anti-sexist fight back is the REAL and only safe space for the working class.

As displayed this summer, workers are sick and tired of being told how to take back the streets they built. Workers are sick of being told that protest and fight back is too disruptive. Workers are sick of being pitted against one another.

But the ruling class, particularly the liberal fascists will do anything to keep us in line and party to their for-profit plans, with voting their number one tactic.

Revolt, don't vote

While reform struggles will never break the chains of the working class, they do provide us with schools for communism. Black workers are key to revolution, and their leadership on the streets is instrumental in building working class confidence.

We are still in a dark night and many of us will struggle at home, at our work places, and with our friends and family over the idea that voting will not liberate the working class. Individualism, cynicism, despair, and fear of Trump's gutter racism are plaguing workers today. But our potential is stronger than ever.

Don't be fooled or blinded by identity politics and top kkkop candidates.

You are a worker. I am a worker. WE are the working class and united we can smash this racist capitalist system.

Don't vote, revolt! ✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Twin pandemic of racism and coronavirus

NYT, 10/3 — Black and Latino Americans are roughly two to three times more likely than their white counterparts to contract the coronavirus, roughly four times more likely to be hospitalized by it, and nearly three times as likely to die from it. Latino children who contract the virus are eight times more likely to be hospitalized than white children, and Black children five times more likely. And of the 121 children who died from the virus through July,…45 percent [were] Latino and 29 percent Black.…

Doctors and scientists…worry that the true gap is probably even greater than the available data indicates. "We're looking at a historic decimation of the Hispanic communities in the United States," says Dr. Peter Hotez, an infectious disease doctor at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "Not only are they dying at much higher rates, but they are also dying younger, which means we are losing working-age adults and parents of school-aged children."

…Black and Latino Americans have faced higher rates of chronic illness and infant mortality for generations.…

The workers who…continue working outside their homes…— the transit, farm and food plant workers, the nursing home aides and cashiers and delivery people — came disproportionately from low-income [Black and Latino] communities.… Many [endure]…other risk factors — poor nutrition, inadequate health care, crowded housing — … [making] them especially vulnerable to the virus and its worst effects.… that date…to the nation's founding. "The ultimate driver is systemic racism."

11,000 postal workers infected with Covid-19

NYT, 10/7 — Douglas Elbaum, a postal worker in Broward County, Fla., arrives at the…Service's Sunrise branch at 4 a.m., when his only companions are his supervisor, the plant's mice and palmetto bugs.

Mr. Elbaum…often lugs hefty packages, some weighing upward of 70 pounds, and sorts them for carrier routes by himself.…

As a 59-year-old with high blood pressure, working in close quarters…Mr. Elbaum views the coronavirus as a constant threat. At least 10,881 postal workers…have been infected by the virus…[and by Sept.] 91 had died.

"Sorting parcels in a social-distanced manner, it's just not possible," Mr. Elbaum said.…Of more than 630,000 employees. Beyond chronic understaffing and the fear of operating during a pandemic.…They worry about a push…to fully privatize mail delivery…

Trump has…undercut their morale by promoting baseless accusations about widespread fraud.… Decades-old delivery trucks…leave letter carriers without air conditioning in the blistering heat. The understaffing, exacerbated by the pandemic, has driven.…part-time people to be grossly overworked. They're just beating them to death.…"

Thousands…have fallen ill, and more were forced to quarantine because of exposure to the virus.…

The Postal Service has yet to establish temperature checks for its employees.…

James Epp, a maintenance employee and [union] official…in Wausau, Wis., said…he still worried about spreading the virus to his children, five and two years old.… "Most people don't want the overtime," explained Chris Czubakowski, a clerk and union official in the Milwaukee area. But…overtime has become critical for the Postal Service to provide its services. "You already have understaffed operations for a decade, where they have been cutting jobs and not hiring," he said.…

Scott Hoffman, president of the…union chapter in the Boston metro area.…worried that… privatiz[ing] the Postal Service [would] render it "at the mercy of the corporations."

Indonesia: working-class women lead strike

NYT, 10/9 — Riot police…fired tear gas and water cannons in Indonesia's capital…to disperse large crowds…protesting a sweeping new law that slashes protections for workers.…in the third day of a national strike against the deregulation law.…Protestors assembled in defiance of a city ban on gathering during the pandemic,…threw rocks at the police and set fires in the city center, burning a police post.

Protests were held in more than 60 locations, stretching from Aceh Province in the west to Papua Province more than 3,000 miles east…

About one million people joined the walkouts each day.…The new statute…benefits the wealthy elite by allowing companies to cut workers' pay, eliminate days off and hire contract workers in place of permanent employees. It will affect women most of all…by allowing companies to eliminate paid maternity and menstrual leave.

"The president is paying back the financiers who helped him win the election, not ordinary people…" said Ermawati, 37, a leader of a factory strike in East Java.… "They are killing us with the omnibus law."

The coronavirus has…infected more than 320,00 people and thrown[n]…six million out of work, adding to the seven million already unemployed.…

Women such as Ms. Ermawati, a laboratory analyst… [and] leader of the…Metal Workers Federation, says the law could cut her pay in half. She helped organize a walkout of about 1,100 workers — nearly all of them women — …at…a dish cannery in Pasuruan Regency.

U.S. helped Japan's fascists cover up World War II atrocities

NYT, 10/11 — The [Japanese] Imperial Army test[ed]…biological and chemical weapons on human subjects in Manchuria before and during World War II… [and] thousands of…Chinese died in the ghastly research.… Some were deliberately infected with pathogens like plague and vivisected without anesthetic to study the results. After the war, the United States helped cover up the research…because it wanted the data…

Evidence of the atrocities…show[ed] smiling Japanese doctors presiding over inhuman scenes reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps.

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

WORKERS TOOK POWER; WE WILL AGAIN!

One hundred and three years ago, November 7, 1917, marked the beginning of the single most important event of the 20th century, the Bolshevik revolution, which directly inspired the Chinese revolution and anti-imperialist struggles around the world from Vietnam to Africa to Latin America.

Russia's working class, headed by the revolutionary communists of the Bolshevik Party and its leader, Vladimir Lenin, freed one-sixth of the world's surface from capitalism. They proved once and for all that it was possible to strive for a world without exploitation, where those who produce all value, the working class, can enjoy the fruits of their labor and not have it stolen by a few parasitical bosses and their lackeys.

The Bolshevik revolution was the first serious attempt by workers and peasants to seize, hold and consolidate state power. Even though capitalism has returned to the former Soviet Union, workers will not forget that the Soviet working class defeated capitalism in 1917; smashed the imperialist armies of 17 countries (including Japan, the U.S., Britain, France, among others) which invaded Russia in 1918 to try to crush the revolution; freed the masses, especially women, from the yoke of capitalist, feudal and religious oppression; and then in 1945 defeated the mightiest and most barbaric army the capitalists had ever organized: the Nazi Wehrmacht.

The revolution frightened the world's bosses, who immediately sent armies from 17 countries to try — in Churchill's words — to "strangle it in the cradle." From 1918 to 1923, millions of workers led by the Red Army defeated the imperialists' counter-revolution. Nearly five million died in that battle, many of whom were the most committed workers the revolution had produced. Lenin himself died because of injuries inflicted by a hired killer.

The masses showed great courage and determination to defend and build their revolution, under the leadership of their revolutionary party. They proved that revolutionary violence on the part of the working class and peasantry were vital to the seizure of state power.

Achievements of the Revolution

The Bolshevik Revolution brought Russia to heights of productive development that capitalism, given a similar time period and circumstances, could never have dreamed of. Bringing the working class to power, the Revolution coordinated their social-economic efforts for the production and exchange of the necessities, the comforts and even some luxuries of life, making them available to all. The Soviet system of production was mainly for use, not for profit. This can only be accomplished by abolishing capitalist profits and the private ownership of property, with its exploitation, poverty, unemployment, racism, fascism and imperialist wars.

In the 1930s, when the entire capitalist world sank into depression, and tens of millions worldwide were left jobless and starving (much like today), the Soviet Union was forging ahead building a new society without unemployment and hunger. They created some measure of a decent life for workers in an incredibly short time, transforming a 90 percent illiteracy rate into one in which nearly everyone was literate.

Around 1938, without any official declaration, the USSR had achieved the era of free bread. One could enter a cafeteria, order little or nothing, and receive all the bread one wanted. You needed, you received — at least to that extent. Even during a drive for heavy industry, living standards rose strikingly when the rest of the world was mired in the Great Depression.

The Soviet Union not only freed workers but also fought against racism and sexism. The battle against racism was particularly significant. As communist Paul Robeson said about his trips to the Soviet Union, he "felt like a human being for the first time since I grew up. Here I am not a Negro but a human being. Before I came I could hardly believe that such a thing could be…. Here, for the first time in my life, I walk in full human dignity."

Heroic fight against Nazis

In 1941, the bosses again tried to destroy the revolution. Hitler, using all of Europe's resources and the largest military machine ever assembled, invaded the Soviet Union with four million troops. They discovered the Soviets were no pushover as occurred in Western Europe. Hitler's prediction — endorsed by western military "experts" — of capturing Moscow in six weeks went up in smoke.

Nazi troops found destruction and desolation in every captured city or town — the "scorched earth" policy. Soviet defenders burned everything to the ground that they could not take with them and then organized armed resistance behind enemy lines: the Partisans.

Over 6,000 factories were dismantled and moved east of the Ural Mountains, re-assembled to produce weapons again, a feat requiring total unity and support of Soviet workers, unmatched by any country, before or since. Soviet soldiers and workers fought for Stalingrad block-by-block, house-by-house and room-by-room to halt the "unbeatable" Nazi invaders. Workers in arms factories produced weapons 24 hours a day for the Red Army, working 12-hour shifts. When Nazi troops captured factories, heroic Soviet workers and soldiers would re-take them.

The entire German Sixth Army and 24 of Hitler's generals were surrounded and killed or captured in the battle of Stalingrad. Never again would the Nazis mount a successful offensive against the Red Army. Stalingrad was truly the turning point of the Second World War. Not until the Nazis were on the run following their defeats at Stalingrad and in the Battle of the Kursk — the biggest armored battle in world history, involving millions of soldiers and 6,000 tanks — did the U.S.-U.K. forces invade Western Eu-

Continued on page 6

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